

The President's Daily Brief

April 23, 1976

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~~Top Secret~~ 25X1

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LEBANON: *Palestine Liberation Army troops, under the direction of the tripartite truce committee, have reportedly assumed control of Beirut's commercial district. They have begun taking up positions in the disputed area between Muslim and Christian sections of the city.*

In addition to the PLA troops operating in Beirut, a 500-man special force drawn mainly from Fatah is being used against Muslim and Palestinian truce violators. The force has met stiff resistance from leftist forces.

The main problem is the continuing exchange of artillery fire between Christian and Muslim suburbs of the capital. Under the terms of the truce agreement, Palestinian forces are not permitted to enter Christian areas and, therefore, cannot stop the shelling.

President Franjiah's representatives returned from Damascus yesterday with assurances that President Asad has made no secret commitments to the Palestinians. US embassy sources believe this will clear the way for Franjiah to sign the constitutional amendment permitting election of his successor.

In the south, a battle between soldiers from the renegade Muslim army and Christian troops based at Qulayah reportedly drew fire from the Israelis. Qulayah is only four kilometers from the Israeli border. The leader of the rebel Muslim troops had been cooperating with Syria in trying to enforce the cease-fire, but apparently triggered the fighting when he refused to allow food supplies to reach the Christian outpost.

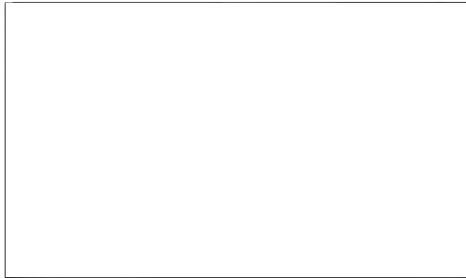
The Syrian forces that were sent to Lebanon's eastern border area two weeks ago appear prepared to stay indefinitely if necessary.

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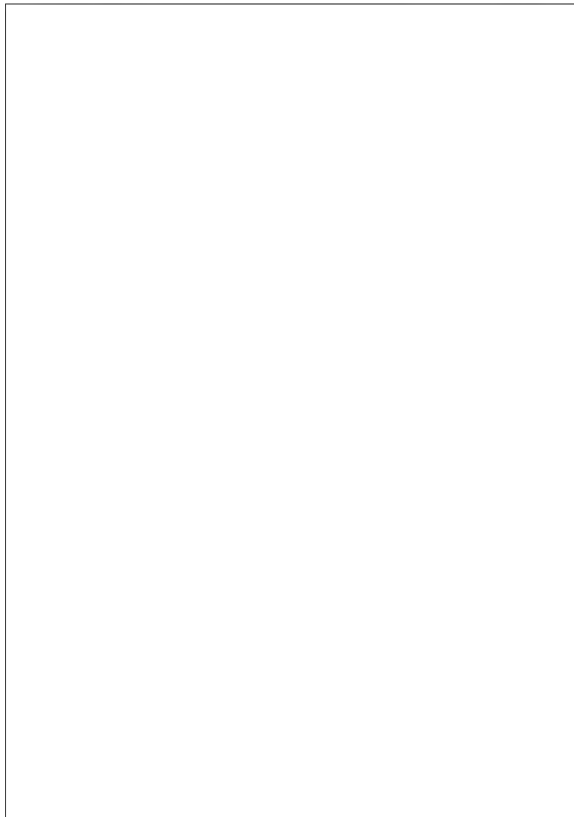
On the Syrian side of the border, they have set up field camps and have established a logistic system to Damascus.

Syrian forces in eastern Lebanon reportedly are remaining in place but are no longer patrolling the Bekaa Valley. Relations between the Syrians and the local population are poor.

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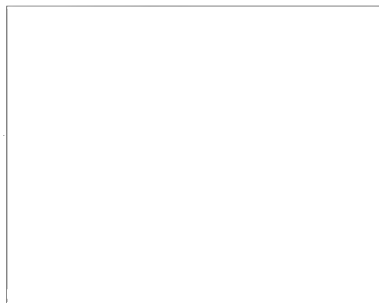


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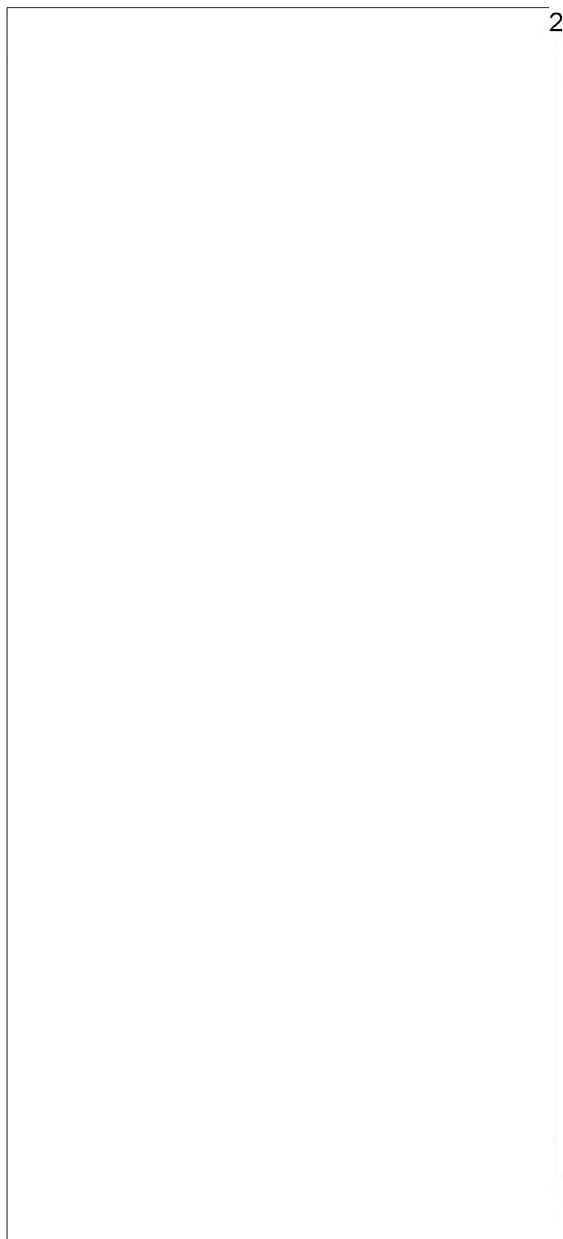


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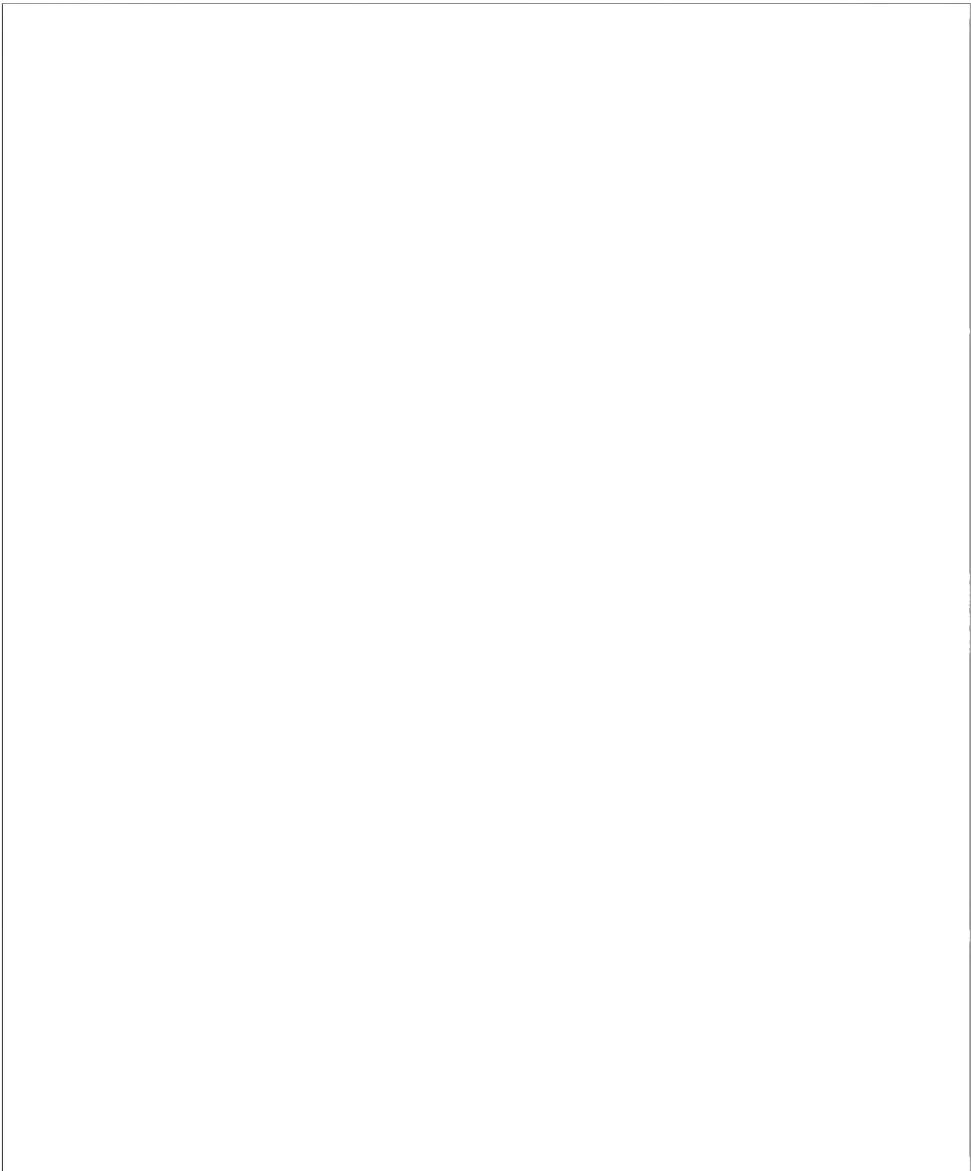
USSR: *The Lenin anniversary celebration yesterday was the occasion for the first ceremonial appearance of the Soviet leadership since the end of the party congress early last month. During the past six weeks, more than half of the Moscow-based full members of the Politburo have been away from the Kremlin for extended periods of rest and recuperation.*

General Secretary Brezhnev spent at least five weeks at a sanatorium. President Podgorny, senior party secretary Suslov, Minister of Defense Grechko, Foreign Minister Gromyko, and Moscow party boss Grishin were away from their offices for periods ranging from ten days to three weeks. Even Premier Kosygin, who maintained a normal work schedule, for two weeks spent his nights at a VIP sanatorium near Moscow.

The only leaders missing from the ceremonies yesterday were party secretary Kirilenko and party Control Committee chairman Pelshe, who had been among the stalwarts minding the office and may now be taking their own vacations.

* * *

Andropov, chairman of the KGB and a member of the Politburo, delivered the Lenin anniversary address. He criticized indirectly your policy of "peace through strength" and commented further on the challenge posed to the Soviet party by West European communists. Andropov's rhetoric was both relatively restrained and conventionally phrased.



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NOTES

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*A new attack submarine
was seen on satellite
photography of the Se-
verodvinsk shipyard com-
plex in the northwestern
USSR in early April.*

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The new submarine appears similar
to the Soviet A-class nuclear unit.

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